



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RECORD NUMBER OF BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Infected Bird Count in San Diego County Now Triple What It Was This Time Last Year

County Vector Control officials announced today that 16 more dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), bringing the total number of positive birds to 58 this season. This triples the number of dead birds (19) that tested positive at this time last year.

"It's more important than ever that the public take action and protect themselves from West Nile virus," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "It only takes one infected mosquito to transmit West Nile virus and statistics show human West Nile virus cases have occurred in areas with low mosquito populations."

Personal protection measures include staying indoors at dawn and dusk, wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, and using insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.

To prevent mosquitoes from breeding around the home, eliminate standing water sources, such as pools that have turned green with algae, birdbaths or ornamental ponds. If the water cannot be eliminated, mosquito-eating fish can be placed in pools and ponds to control mosquito breeding. The County provides the mosquito fish free at 14 locations countywide.

"This is prime mosquito-breeding season," said Erbeck. "We will see many more positive birds through the end of October. Personal protection and eliminating mosquito breeding is critical."

The recently confirmed infected birds included eight crows, six jays, a hawk and an owl. They were found in Ramona (4), Fallbrook (3), San Diego (3), San Marcos (2), and in Alpine, Jamul, Pine Valley and El Cajon. The majority of the positives this year have been found in the North County; the hardest hit areas have been Fallbrook, Ramona, San Diego, Alpine, Oceanside, San Marcos, El Cajon and Valley Center. Last year, San Diego County had 34 total infected birds for the entire season.

To report dead birds or get more information about mosquito fish and West Nile virus, visit the County's Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com or call 1-888-551-INFO (4636). ###